

CAC Minutes

Date: August 8, 2023

Time: 1:00pm

Meeting Held: Virtual- MS Teams and In Person

In Attendance: Susan Richeson, York DA; Mike Braun, OVR Supervisor; Lynsey Klahre, OVR Counselor; Kelsy Walton, OVR Counselor (Virtual); Ian Clayton, OVR Counselor; Julaine Roth, OVR Clerical; Renata Gould, OVR Clerical; Andrew Pennington, Client Assistance Program (Virtual); & James Whitonis, OVR Central Office (Virtual).

Staff Updates

- Vacancies and positions filled:
 - 1 Vacant Clerical Assistant
 - 1 Vacant Supervisor Position
 - 2 Vacant VRC positions
 - New VRC's- Ian Clayton: Ian will be the OVR liaison for Conestoga Valley HS & Penn Manor HS (Lancaster county); Lynsey Klahre: Lynsey will be the liaison for William Penn HS & handle general York referrals; Kelsy Walton: Kelsy will be the OVR liaison for all the high schools in Franklin county. We now have 2 OVR Counselors to cover Franklin county. We have only had 1 Franklin county OVR Counselor for the past 3 years.
 - Kaylee Young will be the VRC now working with IDD adult referrals and 511
 - Renata Gould, new CA 2, will be processing new applications.
 - Susan Richeson announced that our VR supervisor Brenda Bowersox tragically passed away in July and that as an office we are doing a number of things to support her surviving family members and keep Brenda's memory alive.

York DO Updates

HGAC

- Our Commonwealth Technical Institute at the Hiram G. Andrews Center was recognized by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) as the first school to earn an Essential Workforce Skills (EWS) Programmatic Level II Certification in the Building Maintenance diploma program! This recognition showcases the quality education that CTI provides to empower students with the skills they need to be successful in school and work. 🍌

Summer Work Initiative

- The York DO created a number of paid work opportunities for eligible & potentially eligible students this summer in all 4 counties we cover through our local providers

including Youth Advocate Program, The ARC, & United Disability Services. Students are afforded the opportunity to work in city & state parks as well as at Fresh Food Farms in York county. Students are performing outdoor cleanup & maintenance tasks at the park sites and are weighing, sorting, planting, weeding, & harvesting produce at Fresh Farms. The My Work program is a summer program created by OVR to match students with job opportunities and work experiences in their local area. OVR partnered with over 150 municipalities across 47 counties statewide to provide paid work summer experiences to more than 700 students. OVR covers the students' wages and the worksite training and on-site support cost for students, which helps make the program more feasible for more municipalities.

Students participating in PA OVR's My Work summer program at Humane PA's animal shelter in Reading had the exciting opportunity to meet First Lady Lori Shapiro and discuss their important work helping care for cats, dogs, and other animals at the shelter. During the First Lady's visit, students gave a tour of the shelter, showed her their daily job duties, and introduced the First Lady to some of the lovable animals up for adoption.

People Share

- OVR recently presented PeopleShare with a Governor's Employer Award at the PA Workforce Development Association's annual conference! Help us congratulate them for this well-deserved accolade! People Share has an unwavering commitment to building an inclusive workforce and received recognition for their partnership with us to hire and retain individuals with disabilities. Since 2021, they have hired 13 of our customers, ensuring equal opportunities and creating meaningful employment.

Summer Internships

- OVR welcomed 25 talented college students with disabilities to our Summer Internship Program at Commonwealth agencies. Through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry's (L&I) Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Internship Program, interns gained hands-on work experience, valuable skills, and support for their career goals. We're committed to diversity and inclusion, and we believe every individual has something unique and valuable.

Secretary of Pennsylvania Office of Administration Neil R. Weaver and Acting Secretary of Labor & Industry Nancy A. Walker had the privilege of meeting these incredible interns during their orientation. We gathered at the Commonwealth Technology Center in Harrisburg with students participating virtually from various locations across Pennsylvania.

The PA OVR Internship program is a testament to our dedication to empowering all Pennsylvanians to succeed. OVR has been a driving force in assisting Pennsylvanians with disabilities to obtain and retain employment while maintaining their independence. Over the years, OVR has supported nearly 370,000 individuals with vocational counseling, evaluations, medical services, training, placement, and career support.

AgrAbility

- Our partners at AgrAbility gave a presentation at a recent staff in service and created a handout that shares low- tech and in most cases low cost- assistive (AT) options for farmers and agriculture workers with disabilities. You can access the AT on the Farm guide for simple solutions to help farmers with disabilities maintain their employment: <https://lnkd.in/efS9RWtE>
or Reach out to AgrAbility for help with an assessment and referrals@ 814-867-5288
Email: agrability@psu.edu or <https://agrabilitypa.org/>

Comments/Feedback:

Andrew Pennington inquired about when an OVR Counselor vacancy is posted on the Civil Service website whether it is also announced in the job description which caseload or geographic territory is associated with this position. We clarified that it is not. Andrew feels it would be helpful to add these details.

A discussion ensued of why there were only a few participants (other than OVR staff) attending today's CAC meeting. It was agreed that summer vacation schedules, people on leave, etc. are contributing factors. We discussed having a survey sent out to all on the CAC distribution list asking for feedback on what could be done to increase attendance for CAC meetings.

Next Meeting: Tuesday November 14, 2023 at 1 PM: both in person and Virtual option